



THE drum roll

393rd Regular Meeting Volume 40 Number 5 Jan. 6, 2023



The January 2023 meeting will be at the Arlington Hts. Public Library on Friday, January 6, 2023, at 7 PM. It will be live streamed on ZOOM also. A link is attached.

TULLAHOMA

On June 23rd, Rosecrans's Army of the Cumberland, numbering 60,000, initiated a classic campaign of maneuver against the 40,000 strong Confederate army under Braxton Bragg. Confronted with rugged terrain and a heavily entrenched foe, Rosecrans intended to defeat Bragg through strategy rather than bloodshed. He hoped to outflank Bragg, seize control of Bragg's supply line, the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad, at Tullahoma. Rosecrans then hoped to force his opponent into battle outside of those extensive earthworks. It almost worked.

Come to the January meeting to hear the rest of the story from David Powell.

David A. Powell is a graduate of the Virginia Military Institute (1963) with a BA in History. He has published numerous articles in various magazines, and more than fifteen historical simulations of different

battles. For many years David's focus has been on the epic battle of Chickamauga, and he is nationally recognized for his tours of that important battlefield and for publishing six books on the campaign, including *The Chickamauga Campaign Trilogy*, completed in 2016. More recently, Dave has published a book on the battle of New Market, co-authored *The Tullahoma Campaign* with renowned historian Eric Wittenberg, and published *The Impulse of Victory: Ulysses S. Grant at Chattanooga*. Both the latter two books appeared in 2020. Future projects include a multi-volume examination of the Atlanta Campaign, the first of which should appear in 2022-2023.

David, his wife Anne, and their three bloodhounds live and work in the Northwest suburbs of Chicago, Illinois. He is Vice President of Airsped, Inc., a specialized delivery firm.

NORTH ANNA

The epic Overland Campaign of May-June, 1864, breaks down into four major movements: The Wilderness, Spotsylvania, The North Anna, and Cold Harbor. Three of these are well known to most Civil War aficionados, but the other—the encounter at the North Anna—is much less so. On December 2, the North Anna story was presented to the Round Table by Pat McCormick.

The tendency to overlook the North Anna in popular history is exemplified by Bruce Catton's *A Stillness at Appomattox*, where-in the midst of 110 pages of Overland coverage-it merits barely a sentence. Unlike Wilderness-Spotsylvania-Cold Harbor, the North Anna period generated only a few smaller combats, not like

the titanic struggles elsewhere. This movement was more notable for missed opportunities on both sides.

After the bloody clashes at the Wilderness and Spotsylvania, from May 4 to 20, 1864, Grant remarked that he wanted to get Lee out into the open, where he could fight without having to attack earthworks. But how? The combative Lee had been uncharacteristically defense-oriented since the move out of the Wilderness. Grant figured that, if he dangled part of his army as bait, Lee might regain some of his pugnacity and move out to the attack.

Winfield Hancock's II Corps, already battered but still probably the best in the Army of the Potomac at this time, was sent on a march southeast, away from Spotsylvania, presenting a tempting target. (But not too tempting; Hancock would be shielded by the Mattaponi River as he moved.) The other three corps would wait, then move away from Spotsylvania themselves. With any luck they'd catch Lee's countermove out in the open and crush it.

Hancock moved out at 10 P.M. on May 20, reaching Bowling Green by 9 A.M. on May 21. Lee, being informed of Hancock's move but aware that most of the enemy was still at Spotsylvania, reacted cautiously but effectively. He pulled his smallest corps, Richard Ewell's Second, out of the line and moved it to the Mud Tavern intersection on Telegraph Road (which led directly south to the North Anna River and then to the vital railroad intersection of Hanover Junction.) In response, Grant altered the marches of his following corps.

As Grant abandoned Spotsylvania, Lee countered by sending Richard Anderson's First Corps to follow Ewell, while A. P. Hill's Third Corps used roads further west, protecting the army's trains. The Confederates were spread out over 15 miles while the Union host covered 20 miles, with portions of both in close proximity to each other. Both sides had multiple chances to damage the other on May 21, but neither tried to do so; both Grant and Lee were cautious. (Both were also short on cavalry, thanks to Phil Sheridan's Richmond Raid and the Rebel response.) Gordon Rhea refers to May 21 as a low point for both commanders.

On May 22, Lee moved his army behind the North Anna, while Grant regrouped about 5 miles north. But Lee believed Grant was going to move southeast, not directly south towards Hanover Junction. So Lee rested his army around the junction-without setting up defensive lines, digging earthworks, or even blocking

the several crossings. One brigade (John Henagan's South Carolinians) was left in and around a redoubt on the north side of the river, at Chesterfield Bridge. But other crossings-Ox Ford, Jericho Mills-were unguarded.

Plagued by poor maps, Grant pressed on to the North Anna on May 23. Hancock's corps chased Henagan's brigade away and seized Chesterfield Bridge. Meanwhile, Governor Warren's V Corps crossed the ford at Jericho Mills to the west, building a pontoon bridge there. Reports reached Cadmus Wilcox of A.P. Hill's corps that cavalry (not infantry) had crossed there; Wilcox launched his division at the position, not knowing he was attacking an entire corps. His assault caught V Corps unprepared and came close to causing a Union disaster before being beaten back.

Now Lee's river line was pierced in two places. What to do? His chief engineer, Martin L. Smith, concocted an ingenious solution. Lee pulled both of his wings back on the flanks, but entrenched in front of the central crossing at Ox Ford. This "inverted V" divided the Union army into three parts, with two river crossings between each wing, Lee would be free to attack either Union flank as they advanced.

On May 24, after trying and failing to cross at Ox Ford, Ambrose Burnside of IX Corps located another ford, from which he might flank Ox Ford. The lead brigade across, drunkenly led by James Ledie, jumped the gun and charged the trenches alone, being routed in the attempt. Now was the moment for Lee to move out of his shield and crush one of Grant's wings-but nothing happened. So ill he was confined to his tent, Lee could only murmur, "We must strike them a blow" as the opportunity passed.

Grant, now realizing the danger he was in, ordered his forces on both flanks to dig in. Once again, as at Spotsylvania, he was stalemated, but at least Lee's plan to cripple Grant had failed also. After a couple of days, Grant sidled southeast again, ultimately leading to Cold Harbor. (Lee's puzzling passivity from May 21-24 gave Grant the idea that the enemy was "whipped," with repercussions at Cold Harbor.)

I would like to thank the Round Table for the opportunity to unspool the tale of North Anna.

Pat McCormick

Notice that the Jan. meeting will be the 393rd meeting of the NICWRT. I started off with the wrong number, but now I think we are correct.



2022-23 Officers and Trustees

The next Saturday discussion will be on Saturday, Jan. 21, 2023, at 10 AM. The topic will be a continuation of the Atlanta Campaign starting with Peachtree Creek.

Speaker lineup:

- Sept. 9: Laurie Schiller. The 29th USCT at the Crater
Oct. 7: Jerry Allen. 8th Wisconsin
Nov. 4: Phil Angelo. Morgan's Raid
Jan. 6: Dave Powell: Tullahoma
Dec. 2: Pat McCormick. North Anna
Feb. 3: Mary Abroe. Civil War Centennial, Rhetoric, Reality, and the Bounds Of Selective Memory
Mar. 3: Rob Girardi. TBA
April 7: Michael Wynne. The Real Story of The Rock Island POW Camp. This Program will be on ZOOM.
May 5: Wayne Rhine. The Kersage
June 2: Banquet. David Zarefsky. The Strategy of Lincoln's First Inaugural Address

President	Laurie Schiller
1 st Vice President	Wayne Rhine
2 nd Vice President	Vacant
Secretary	Bruce Allardice
Treasurer	Pat McCormick
Assistant Treasurer	Jerry Allen
Membership	Vacant
Historian	Pat McCormick
Trustee	Tom Gavigan (2024)
Trustee	Fred Reczkowitz (2024)
Trustee	Danielle Kafka (2026)
Trustee	Vacant (2026) (Limberg)
Trustee	Alisa Corsi (2028)
Trustee	Vacant

Appointed Positions

Book Raffle	Vacant
Newsletter Editor	Jerry Rodosky gjerosky@gmail.com

Upcoming Events

As a note the board has decided not to collect dues for the 2022-23 year.

Please email Laurie or Wayne if you are interested in volunteering for an open position. Also, please think membership! We need new people!